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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8185th meeting
Wednesday, 21 February 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Sheikh Al-Sabah	(Kuwait)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Amon-Tanoh
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tileuberdi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Czaputowicz
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security

Letter dated 1 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/85)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security

Letter dated 1 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/85)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, the former Secretary-General, Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/85, which contains a letter dated 1 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: Allow me, in this very important debate related to the Charter and to the maintenance of international peace and security, to convey, before reading out my statement, a personal emotion that I cannot hide.

I am deeply saddened by the terrible suffering of the civilian population in eastern Ghouta, where 400,000 people live in hell on Earth.

I know that very important consultations are taking place in the Council, aimed at achieving a cessation of hostilities in Syria for a month, with a number of conditions, and of course I fully support that effort. But I believe that eastern Ghouta cannot wait, and so my appeal to all those involved is for an immediate suspension of all war activities in eastern Ghouta, allowing humanitarian aid to reach all those in need and for the evacuation of an estimated 700 people who need urgent treatment that cannot be provided there, and creating the possibility for other civilians to be effectively treated on-site. This is a human tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes, and I do not think we can allow things to go on happening in this horrendous way.

I thank the Government of Kuwait for organizing this briefing. I would like to express my appreciation to Kuwait for hosting last week's International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq. I reiterate the call I made there for global solidarity with Iraq in the task of reconstruction. Let me also acknowledge that the liberation of Kuwait from the forces of Saddam Hussein took place 27 years ago this month. This anniversary — of an undertaking in which the international community used the Charter to uphold the Charter — is a fitting backdrop to today's discussion.

The Charter of the United Nations has stood the test of time. Drafted following the utter collapse of international order, it helped to stitch the world back together. Drawn up as the full scope of the Holocaust was emerging, it is part of the global bulwark against international crimes today. But of course, the founders of our Organization understood that recovering from the Second World War was not only a matter of preventing crimes. They placed people at the heart of the Charter and proclaimed that the true basis of peace was to be found in promoting respect for human rights and securing social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom for all.

Today, the Charter's principles — non-use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention, cooperation, self-determination and the sovereign equality of Member States — remain the foundation of international relations. The values it proclaims — equal rights, non-discrimination, tolerance and good-neighbourliness — remain guideposts for global harmony. However, the challenges we face have evolved, the drivers of conflict have become more complex, new threats have emerged, and the consequences of instability now flow far beyond their source. Addressing the challenge of migration, as well as the threats of climate change and inequality, will test the Charter and our capacity to secure a better world for all. Thus, while the Charter's principles are as relevant

as ever, we must continue to update its tools, we must use those tools with greater determination, and we must go back to the Charter's roots for inspiration as we strive to deliver for "we the peoples".

That work starts with prevention. As I said to the Council at the beginning of my mandate, the international community spends far more time and resources responding to crises than in preventing them. We have to rebalance our approach to international peace and security. Our goal must be to do everything we can to help countries avert the outbreak of crises that take a high toll on humankind. This vision extends beyond wars and conflicts to natural disasters, fragility and other kinds of stress. Our commitment must be to all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — and to eliminate discrimination based on gender, religion, race, nationality or other status. Across this work, we must recognize the great power of women's participation, which makes peace agreements sturdier, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous.

Preventing crises is primarily the responsibility of Member States. Chapter VI of the Charter describes the tools that are available to them for that purpose: negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and other peaceful measures and means. The United Nations is there to offer support to States in resolving their disputes and preventing the emergence of crises.

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. I encourage Member States to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court and to make greater use of the Court and of other international courts and tribunals to help settle and avoid the escalation of their disputes.

The United Nations prevention efforts in The Gambia, Guinea and Burkina Faso over the past several years, always taken in coordination with and often in direct support of the activities of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, highlight the conditions under which these efforts are most successful. The role played in those contexts by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel underscores the value of United Nations regional political presences, as in other contexts does the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

Mediation is among the paths suggested by Chapter VI. In recent weeks, the new High-Level Mediation Advisory Board has undertaken its first initiative. We have planned a number of other missions — with the agreement of the countries concerned — to Member States facing stability challenges. My own good offices are available to the Security Council at all times to help prevent, manage or resolve conflicts.

Of course, the Charter confers upon the Security Council powers and responsibilities in the field of conflict prevention. At this time, it is especially urgent for the Security Council to uphold its responsibility to bring about a political settlement on Syria, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015), under United Nations auspices.

Sustaining peace is a key part of prevention. My report on sustaining peace (S/2018/43) is now before the entire membership, and I look forward to taking forward its proposals. Prevention also depends crucially on advancing sustainable and inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an integrated framework for addressing the economic and social drivers of conflict and for building stable societies, including through a focus on institutions and the rule of law.

The word "peacekeeping" does not appear in the Charter, but that flagship United Nations activity is firmly rooted in the Charter's ideals and demonstrates the Charter's flexibility. Peacekeeping has a solid record of service, sacrifice and success, and it has ably served as a tool to assist in the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as to achieve more robust objectives. However, today peacekeeping faces major challenges. Often, peacekeepers are deployed indefinitely to dangerous environments where there is little peace to keep, where there are no political solutions in sight, where there are multiple armed groups and where casualties are rising sharply from attacks on peacekeepers. For these and other reasons, the United Nations ends up serving as a crisis baby-sitter or focusing on simple containment — and that is simply not sustainable.

A detailed plan of action to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers is being implemented by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and our missions. The Department is also carrying out a series of strategic reviews under the guidance of the Security Council. There is no one-size-fits-all operation. Our aim is to refocus peacekeeping with realistic

expectations; with well-structured, well-supported and well-equipped forces; and with the support we need from host countries. We look to the Security Council to provide clear and focused mandates, and we call for greater engagement on the part of all Member States in providing personnel and political, material and financial backing.

At the same time, peacekeeping is not the solution to all crisis situations. Different contexts may require other kinds of action, including peace enforcement and counter-terrorist operations undertaken by coalitions of Member States. Here, too, clear Security Council mandates and predictable, adequate funding will be critical.

Today, we have the highest number of United Nations sanctions regimes in the history of the Organization. Since implementation goes beyond Member States, greater attention may need to be paid to the private sector, in particular the financial industry. We must be careful to avoid unintended consequences, including humanitarian ones.

Let me turn now from Chapters VI and VII to Chapter VIII. Even before most regions had created regional or subregional organizations, the drafters of the Charter recognized the value of regional arrangements and agencies as a first resort for the pacific settlement of local disputes. Regional perspectives are critical in understanding challenges. Regional capacities are crucial for rapid deployment. Regional ownership is essential for solutions to take root.

Among the most vital and dynamic of today's partnerships is our work with the African Union. Our organizations have signed two new framework agreements — on peace and security, and on the alignment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Africa's Agenda 2063. I again call on the international community to ensure predictable and adequate financing for African forces operating in Somalia, the Sahel and around Lake Chad. We are also forging closer ties with the European Union and several other organizations.

The purposes and principles of the Charter speak to today's challenges as firmly as they spoke to people who had just lived through the most horrible war the world has ever seen. The reforms in which we are all engaged, which span peace and security, development and management, aim to make us more effective in fulfilling the Charter's vision. The Charter is our living template for serving "we the peoples". The Secretariat stands ready to help Member States embrace the full spirit of the Charter and use it to its full potential across all pillars of our work.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: As this is my first time back at the United Nations and addressing the Security Council as a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for having invited me to take part in this important meeting. I also commend the Government of Kuwait for its successful presidency of the Security Council in the month of February.

The world we live in today is completely different from what it was seven decades ago, when the United Nations was founded. While we have seemingly moved on from the era of large-scale war between States, today we face an increasing number of emerging global challenges. They include climate change, tens of millions of refugees, violent extremism, terrorism and nuclear proliferation, to name just a few. At the same time, the fourth industrial revolution, represented by enormous technological advancements — such as in the areas of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and biological engineering — has brought about dramatic changes in the shape and form of our daily lives. They will also have a significant impact on the security environment of the future world.

Under those dramatically changing circumstances of today's world, some are questioning the role and effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole. However, those critics may also agree that, without the United Nations, the international community could have never succeeded in preventing another world war in the past 70-plus years. Furthermore, if it were not for the United Nations, the international community would not have been able to make significant gains on eradicating extreme poverty, promoting public health and scaling up access to education. Who else would have been able to provide legitimacy for the actions that the Security Council takes in addressing conflicts today?

The primary responsibilities vested in the Security Council to maintain international peace and security

are therefore needed now more than ever. In that regard, I value the Council's improved working relations with the other interconnected pillars of the United Nations system, and also its increased focus on the concept of sustaining peace. Addressing the root causes of conflict and working towards preventing conflicts before they escalate, alongside national and international stakeholders, will ultimately make the Council, and the Organization, stronger as a result.

In order to effectively respond to non-traditional and transnational security challenges such as climate change, terrorism and violent extremism, nuclear proliferation and cross-border insecurity, the Security Council should undergo reforms to be more flexible in its decision-making process. Reform of the Security Council is long overdue.

We must also remind ourselves of the fact that the primary responsibility for preserving peace and security lies with Member States themselves. The failure of some national leaders to fulfil their responsibilities to their own peoples significantly undermines the role of the United Nations in resolving conflicts. That can also lead to some Member States neglecting their responsibility to protect their own citizens, while hiding behind the concepts of national ownership and State sovereignty.

Those political leaders often create dire political and economic instabilities where innocent civilians bear the bulk of the suffering. We have learned by now that, in order to hold such leaders accountable, the Security Council should not limit itself to simply calling for actions in rhetoric or statements. The Council must act on those situations.

Having said that, I would like to touch on several international and regional conflicts.

In the Middle East, we must now be prepared for the post-Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) era. The Security Council must focus more on northern Syria, the ongoing civil war in Syria, tension in the Golan Heights and the continuing Syrian crisis of refugees and internally displaced persons. Those issues could resurface, seriously threaten regional stability and lead to further conflicts among States in the region. Such instability could lead to exacerbating tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and bring Israel and Iran closer to direct conflict.

Violence between Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon and other regional threats could also have the potential to spin out of control as a result of deteriorating regional security.

In addition, after losing its territories of terror in the Middle East, we cannot dismiss the possibility of ISIS moving on to settle in vulnerable places such as Libya.

The division among member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council is also of serious concern. In that regard, I highly commend the mediating role played by His Highness Sheikh Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait.

Exposure to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism is especially alarming in places like the Sahel region in Africa. As extreme poverty, terrorism, the illicit arms trade and human trafficking are all prevalent in a volatile cross-border environment, we must bolster our collective actions to address such vulnerabilities. During my tenure as Secretary-General, in June 2013, I established the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel to address such issues. I am pleased to see that Secretary-General António Guterres, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are working in triangular cooperation to advance that important effort.

Towards the end of my second term as Secretary-General, in April 2016, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted twin resolutions (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) on the review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The resolutions expressed deep concern about the high human cost and suffering caused by armed conflict.

Today, not only do international peace and security issues remain at a critical juncture, but multilateralism is also at stake. We must remember that multilateralism cannot be upheld by one Member State alone or a group of States. The United Nations, especially the Security Council, must continue to endeavour to strengthen that driving ideal, while overcoming whatever challenges may loom over the horizon.

In that regard, I must emphasize that the entire United Nations membership should faithfully and thoroughly implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, while coping with other new challenges, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, among others.

In that connection, as Secretary-General António Guterres has stated, I believe that the situation on the Korean peninsula is currently our most serious and imminent challenge. As we all know, today the Korean peninsula is faced with serious challenges as a result of the continued nuclear tests and long-range ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. At the end of last year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced its "completion of State nuclear force" and proclaimed itself a "nuclear State." That is a serious threat to international peace and security and clearly violates all the relevant Security Council resolutions and the regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In fact, the Security Council has responded with tough measures, including increasingly stronger sanctions, to deter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear development. Six of the 10 different resolutions adopted since its first nuclear test, in 2006, were adopted in the past two years alone. Firm and unified actions by the Security Council will be essential until North Korea's nuclear weapons and programmes are completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantled.

In that regard, I urge the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions. At the same time, I urge all Member States to do their part in helping to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue through diplomatic efforts. Only by seeking solutions to all these problems through peaceful means can we uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, the participation of North Korean athletes in the XXIII Winter Olympic Games, in PyeongChang, South Korea, has aroused much hope and expectation around the world. I warmly welcome the recent resumption of inter-Korean dialogue and the resulting reconciliatory atmosphere between the two Koreas that was created before, and has existed during, the Olympic Games.

We must keep alive that hard-won and newly created momentum for dialogue, so that the narrow window of opportunity it has provided will be able to lead to a more meaningful and genuine dialogue process towards reconciliation, peace and the ultimate denuclearization of North Korea. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula would also help to spur the establishment of wider peace and stability in North-East Asia, thereby setting the stage for greater regional development and prosperity.

That process also requires the whole-hearted support of the United Nations, and I count on the Security Council in moving the whole process to that end. We need genuine and strong commitment from both South and North Korea to engage in dialogue, while supported by the United States, China, Japan and Russia. The current reconciliatory atmosphere must be nurtured through the continued engagement of both the South and North Korean authorities. The United States can also play a crucial role in engaging with North Korea, as was suggested by President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea.

Throughout my years as Secretary-General, I witnessed the unique power of sports in contributing to peace and development in many places around the world. I am happy to have seen such positive energy once again in my country during the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. In that regard, I would like to commend Mr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, for his visionary leadership in facilitating the North Korean athletes' participation in the Games, particularly that of the joint women's ice-hockey team.

Once again, I would like to thank the President and the members of the Security Council for inviting me to address the Council, during which I look forward to an active exchange of thoughts and ideas.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

At the outset, allow me to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing. I assure him that the State of Kuwait will spare no effort during its mandate to be a good supporter to his efforts and vision towards improving the mechanisms of the United Nations, thereby strengthening its effectiveness in reducing the dangers and threats facing our world today.

I would also like to thank former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for participating in this meeting and delivering a valuable briefing that is the result of a decade at the helm of the United Nations. This is a historic moment. We are in the presence of

two — the current and former — Secretaries-General in one meeting. I am therefore deeply grateful that they accepted the invitation to participate in this meeting. We will not find a better person to address the Security Council on the importance of our topic today than a former and present Secretary-General.

It is appropriate to start this meeting on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security by quoting the first lines of the Preamble of the Charter, which illustrate the reason for our meeting:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The State of Kuwait decided to convene this important meeting to discuss our collective responsibility and commitment regarding the purposes and principles of the Charter, which represent a constitution pertaining to multilateral and international action. The members of the Council are gathered in the Chamber today to examine the tools set out in the Charter, which the Council has at its disposal, to effectively maintain international peace and security and address the challenges currently facing the world.

The Charter of the United Nations is an instrument of an international legal nature that serves as a clear framework for regulating relations among States. If we abided by its provisions, threats undermining peace and security would decrease. It is also necessary to implement its provisions on an equal footing, effectively and collectively, while committing ourselves to its purposes and principles. It is essential that we work together as one to end violence and aggression, establish friendly relations among nations; ensure respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, as well as equal rights and the right to self-determination; and promote and encourage respect for human rights. Despite the fact that those purposes and principles exist and that all Members of the United Nations should abide by them, we find that they are flagrantly flouted in ways that undermine not only regional peace and security, but also international security in general. We in the State of Kuwait underwent a very trying situation, which everyone is aware of, as a result of grave violations of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The State of Kuwait did not decide to choose the purposes and principles of the Charter as the topic for today's meeting at random. We are currently the smallest Member State on the Council in terms of our physical size. However, the issue of respecting the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law is extremely important for all countries, in particular the small ones. In fact, the principles and purposes of the Charter represent the first line of defence for small countries. The holding of this meeting in February was also not based on a random decision. Every year on 26 February, The State of Kuwait celebrates its liberation from the Iraqi occupation in 1991. That liberation was the consequence of the international community's commitment to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter. In a few days from now, we will celebrate the twenty-seventh anniversary of our liberation.

The example of Kuwait's liberation clearly attests to what we can do when the international community pools its efforts under the umbrella of the United Nations, as well as through the legitimate Security Council resolutions supporting the rule of law and upholding rights, justice, while combating tyranny and injustice. The process leading to the liberation of Kuwait is a historic and successful model that highlights the Security Council's ability to set right the situation caused by an act of aggression, the goal of which was to undermine and violate the noble purposes and principles of the Charter. In that context, I would like to raise three important issues.

First, the tools that the Security Council has at its disposal in order to shoulder its responsibilities. Seventy years after the founding of the United Nations, its Charter has in no way diminished in importance. The Charter includes tools that enable us to confront challenges, including Chapter VI, which provides an important tool for resolving disputes through peaceful means, negotiations, mediation and arbitration, to name a few. This tool should be further activated. In fact, measures adopted by the Council in times of crisis frequently represent a delayed reaction to an event. Often, the Council fails to consider preventive measures to prevent emerging crises by addressing them from the outset.

The root causes of crises are often attributable to economic and social issues, such as poverty and unemployment. The Security Council often forgets that the third pillar of the United Nations Charter — after peace and security, and human rights — is development. Working to achieve sustainable development requires an environment that is conducive to political stability and security, and confronting the root causes of the challenges that we are aware of. In this context, we note that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a very specific Sustainable Development Goal — Goal 16 — which calls for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Early warning and addressing conflicts before they erupt requires the political will of the Council. Let us recall some of the massacres and tragedies when the Council failed to adopt the measures necessary to save thousands and even millions of lives, such as the Rwanda genocide and the Srebrenica massacre. Those are examples that demonstrate the failure of the Council and the international community to act to prevent such crises in a timely manner. They are lessons for us all.

We are also aware that, in certain circumstances, mediation, negotiations and other peaceful means probably will not lead to resolving crises, but in those cases Chapter VII allows for the use of force so as to maintain or restore international peace and security. The liberation of Kuwait demonstrated the effectiveness and legitimacy of Chapter VII through a legitimate military response to a despicable military invasion. That response was mandated by resolution 678 (1990) after all diplomatic means had been exhausted.

With regard to Chapter VIII, we firmly believe in the constructive role that regional and subregional organizations can play in contributing to the establishment of peace and security regionally and internationally. We call for greater cooperation between the Security Council and such regional organizations.

My second point concerns the unity of the Security Council. The Council has many tools at its disposal for settling crises, including those that promote their peaceful resolution before they erupt. However, being able to use such tools successfully depends on the Council's unity and ability to agree and reach a consensus. Over the years and decades, we have seen the Council sometimes unable to settle crises because of divergent points of view among Council members, above all regarding the use of the right of veto. Among the issues that have been affected most negatively by the failure of the Council to act is the Palestinian question, which has been on the Council's agenda for more than 70 years and has yet to be resolved. There is also the Syrian crisis, which is entering its seventh year and has cost the lives of more than 400,000 people. The unity of the Security Council, in particular its five permanent members, is of the utmost importance if it is to function and take decisions effectively and decisively.

My third point relates to the Secretary-General. We highly appreciate the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to improve the two pillars of peace and security in the work of the United Nations organs. We support his vision, in particular concerning international diplomacy and the need to take all preventive measures before emergency situations erupt. We stress the important and key role played by the Secretary-General in bringing any matter to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the State of Kuwait has returned to the Council after 40 years with the same principles that it defended during its first term in 1978 and 1979, despite the major changes that the world has undergone over the last four decades. That is the Kuwait that members have known over the years: contributing in the efforts to maintain international peace and security; believing in dialogue over brute force; seeking good neighborly relations and ensuring the best relations with its neighbors; leading regional mediation and settling conflicts through peaceful means; active in multilateral diplomacy; leader in supporting humanitarian work; and committed to the the purposes and principles of the United Nations, both in letter and spirit.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Czaputowicz (Poland): First of all, let me thank the State of Kuwait, and in particular His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for convening today's important debate. Let me also thank Secretary General António Guterres for his valuable remarks, and former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important comments. Those comments demonstrate the continuation of work of the Security

Council in the field of maintaining international peace and security.

It is indisputable that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations proclaim the most fundamental values for the international community of States. They describe both the goals that should be pursued and the essential rules that should be followed. I would like to reiterate that Poland has always been deeply committed to the fundamental ideas constituting the legal basis of the United Nations, beginning with the signing of the Declaration by United Nations in 1942. Throughout over 70 years of our membership in the United Nations, Poland has been strongly committed to maintaining international peace and security. That strong commitment continues until the present day — when Poland, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, makes efforts aimed at strengthening the Charter and enhancing trust in international law.

Let me recall the sometimes underestimated principle set out in Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Charter, which states:

> "[a]ll Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter."

That principle should be considered as a Grundnorm — in other words, a fundamental norm — for United Nations Members. In fact, as a horizontal system of cooperation, international law depends on the reliability and constancy of commitments undertaken by States. That principle consists of two parts, namely, the fulfilment of the obligations assumed and acting in good faith.

With regard to the first part — the fulfilment of the obligations assumed — we stress that respecting obligations by every State is a basic tenet of international legal relations. It ensures confidence and trust among States.

As for the second part, the principle of good faith obliges States to apply their international law duties reasonably and in such a manner that their purpose can be achieved legally. That principle works as a corrective factor and prevents the abuse of one's rights. Respecting international law obligations in good faith therefore means that States must abstain from acts contrary to the purpose of their commitments and obligations. Let me stress that, if a State acts without respect for the principles set out iin Article 2, it diminishes the significance of the Charter and, in consequence, the global peace architecture based on it.

In that context, it is indispensable, once again, to strengthen our call for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The date of today's debate — 27 years after the liberation of the State of Kuwait, in which Poland was actively engaged — is a forceful reminder for the international community of States. Today too we face one of the most egregious expressions of the threat to international peace and security, that is, the aggression of one State against another.

We reiterate that the Security Council has proved to be a guardian of the purposes and principles of the Charter. Therefore, the Council should be considered the ultimate custodian of States' territorial sovereignty, the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and without distinction. It is also the Security Council that can take significant initiatives and actions in that regard. One of the most prominent examples of the pivotal role of the Security Council as a guardian of the maintenance of international peace and security wasthe liberation of the State of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation.

Moreover, actions taken to prosecute the alleged perpetrators of the most heinous international crimes through the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, as well as through the referral of cases to the International Criminal Court, have also been of paramount importance. Equally, Council resolutions aimed at combating international terrorism must be acknowledged and commended.

Nonetheless, there are still flagrant violations of international law posing threats to international peace and security, as well as to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the illegal annexation of Crimea and support for separatist forces in eastern Ukraine. In that vein, we are also deeply concerned about violations of international humanitarian law and the Chemical Weapons Convention in Syria.

Having mentioned Syria, I must also refer to very worrying developments we learned about yesterday with regard to further shelling of eastern Ghouta. There

is no justification for indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities. They must stop, and parties to the conflict must strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. We call upon everyone to alleviate the suffering of civilians, including children, by granting them free and safe access to humanitarian assistance. We urgently call for stopping hostilities in all of Syria.

As stated by the Secretary General,

> "[p]eace is a tireless undertaking, to which all United Nations agencies and bodies must work, in accordance with their mandates and responsibilities." (*S/PV.7926, p. 2*)

We therefore pledge to engage actively in all efforts to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We cannot forget that the Security Council is not only one of the guardians of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, but is also obliged, under the Charter, to act in accordance with them.

Mr. Amon-Tanoh (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to welcome the convening of this meeting on the maintenance of international peace and security and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the relevance and timeliness of which invites us to turn to the resources of the Charter and the Security Council for answers to the concerns of our world regarding peace and security. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation for the kind invitation to participate in this high-level meeting.

I congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on the quality of his statement, as well as the former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his insightful contribution.

The convening of this meeting by your country, Mr. President, 27 years after its liberation by an international coalition led by the Security Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of our common Organization, is a strong symbol of the strength of our principles. My country, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council at that time, in 1990 and 1991, contributed significantly to the triumph of the law and the values enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter by playing a decisive role in the adoption of resolutions 678 (1990) and 687 (1991), seeking to end Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. Côte d'Ivoire's resolute affirmation of the founding principles of our Organization at a decisive moment in its existence reflects the deep values of my country and its faith in the ideal of the United Nations Charter.

Born from the resolve of States to protect people from further destructive conflicts, the United Nations is constantly working to maintain international peace and security. Its Charter advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes and regulates the use of the coercive measures it provides in the event of the persistence of a conflict. Our Council is therefore conversant with Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the Charter, in addition to the provisions of Articles 1 and 2 of Chapter I, on building and preserving peace.

The geopolitical changes of the world have reinforced the need to put the Charter and the Security Council at the centre of our reflections on international peace and security by going beyond the constraints of sovereignty — increasingly brandished by Member States — and prioritizing our obligation to end serious attacks on the right to life. The sustainability of the architecture of the maintenance of international peace and security is therefore based on the ability of the Charter to adapt to the requirements of each major period in history, as well as that of Member States to restore the strength of moral values in their relations. In such circumstances, it is necessary to assess the impact of the changing nature of conflicts and the emergence of new global threats on the effectiveness of the instruments of the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Côte d'Ivoire is convinced that one of the greatest responsibilities of the international community today is the prevention of armed conflict, which, if properly managed, could save humankind from further suffering. It is in that spirit that the participants in the 2005 World Summit, held here at the United Nations, emphasized the pressing need to promote a culture of prevention. In that context, it is appropriate to highlight and commend the good offices of the Office of the Secretary-General, which constitute a fundamental element in conflict prevention and resolution through preventive diplomacy. The effectiveness of that instrument, however, lies in the ability of the Secretary-General to embody the moral authority of our Organization and his persuasive force, particularly in regard to the Security Council and General Assembly.

Our Organization has transformed itself structurally so as to be able to detect the beginnings of conflict and ensure that conflict prevention and diplomacy are no longer discrete tools largely dependent on, inter alia, the good will of the parties and cooperation of neighbouring countries. To that end, we must make conflict prevention a key component in how the United Nations operates in the area of peace and security. My delegation encourages training in and support for early warning mechanisms put in place by subregional and regional organizations, and support for the establishment of prevention mechanisms by civil society structures. We must, however, recognize that the efforts of the international community to prevent conflict have not been enough to prevent the outbreak of conflicts in the world.

By signing the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, the founding Members sought to create a new world order based on multilateralism and its mission to make peace a universal common good, the preservation of which has been entrusted to the United Nations and the Security Council, within the framework of its fundamental responsibilities.

The proliferation of intra-State conflicts and civil wars is straining the United Nations peacekeeping system, established during the Cold War, in response to the problem of global insecurity. It raises as a priority the question of the legitimacy, legality and necessity of the use of force against a Member State, without the prior authorization of the Security Council, in order to prevent civilian massacres.

That issue, which remains relevant, especially in the light of the paralysis of our Council when facing the most serious crises, is central to the doubts concerning the effectiveness of the instruments of the Charter. Indeed, the effectiveness of those instruments is sorely tested when confronting serious human rights violations and mass crimes such as those perpetrated in Somalia in 1993, Rwanda in 1994 and Bosnia in 1995, even though a peacekeeping operation was present on the ground.

Beyond peacekeeping operations, the issue of the legality and necessity of the use of force also arises with regard to armed interventions by coalitions formed to act in the name of peace. For my country, the use of force to maintain international peace and security must be authorized exclusively by the Security Council in order to give it the legal authority necessary to prevent any type of excess and abuse.

The leaders of our world Organization and its Member States have always courageously found in the painful events we have faced, as well as in the Charter, the instruments and means to rebound and reform the system to maintain peace. It is hard to speak of the change in our Organization's response to global disorder without highlighting the profound and multidimensional transformations of peacekeeping operations, inspired by the lessons of the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia and the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which the Brahimi report (S/2000/809) brought to light. While those responses remain imperfect, they are in many cases the only ones that have saved millions of people and led to success in many countries, including Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Namibia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Haiti.

My country can attest to the effectiveness of the range of provisions of the Charter concerning the maintenance of international peace and security when they enjoy the necessary legitimacy and legality and are accepted in good faith. The success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, which we celebrated in this Chamber, was the culmination of a process in which all the measures set forth in the Charter and adopted by the Security Council were put into practice in my country. I would point to the most important steps, including a political agreement and the authorization of the parties prior to the deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; a sanctions regime, including an embargo against arms and diamonds, as well as individual sanctions; the authorization to use force to destroy heavy weapons threatening civilians; and respect for the political agreement and the ballot results certified by the United Nations.

The international peace and security system, derived from the Charter, is at a crossroads. It should provide new responses to global challenges, such as terrorism and climate change. My country calls upon the Council to take stock of its impact on international peace and security. These new developments oblige the United Nations to redefine its functions and methods by focusing on ways to prevent crises, expand partnerships and broaden the scope of its activities for peace and security. As Secretary-General António Guterres underscored,

> "Prevention requires us to address root causes across the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. It must be the priority in everything we do." (*A/71/PV.60, p. 13*)

Côte d'Ivoire believes that the much-needed reform should also involve closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which would be an asset in the fight against terrorism. The Council should provide increased support to entities in that fight, such as the Group of Five for the Sahel and the African Union Mission in Somalia, in which the United Nations is not ready to engage.

In the light of the new challenges facing our States and the role the United Nations must play together with us, there is an urgency to forge ahead with Security Council reform in order to strengthen its legitimacy and its acceptance by all. Only a strong Security Council that reflects today's world will encourage States to shoulder their primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to personally thank the Secretary-General for being here a second day in a row, but, more important, for his comments on Syria. I think that it is time for us to realize that we cannot continue to look away. I very much appreciate him taking the time to make that personal plea. I think it is important for all of us to know. It is certainly an honour to have former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with us today. We welcome him back home and are happy to see him.

I thank Kuwait's presidency of the Security Council for convening today's meeting. It is important that we pause for a moment every so often to reflect why it is we are here and what guides our work. We should start by being honest. There is a lot of lip service paid to the Charter of the United Nations. Everyone claims to be motivated by it and to be acting in accordance with its principles. But all too often Member States invoke the United Nations Charter not to inspire us to act, but to excuse their lack of action. And so we see the Security Council frequently failing to act at the times it is most important to defend the principles of the Charter. However, the United Nations is not simply a collection of nations. The United Nations Charter gives this organ an identity and a meaning of its own. The Charter commits all Members to the pursuit of peace and security based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination. It calls on Members to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. In practice, however, the United Nations has all too often fallen short of that ideal.

Sovereignty is critically important. The United States will never forfeit its sovereign right to govern itself and determine its future. All Member States share that right, but they also struggle to balance their sovereign interests with the need to work cooperatively with other nations. In the United States our Constitution and democratic system of Government bind us to act in the interests of our people. I am accountable to the American people in what I say and do. Governments that are not accountable to their people are less constrained. They often point to sovereignty to justify bad behaviour and claim the Council has no business meddling in their affairs. But sovereignty gives no country the right to trample on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.

Human rights are the Security Council's business. That is so because the United Nations Charter calls on all Members to respect those rights, and also because violations of human dignity inevitably lead to threats to peace and security. Sovereignty is no excuse for a Government to use violence and rape to expel a minority group to a neighbouring country, as the Burmese security forces have done. Sovereignty is no excuse for the Council to do nothing. Sovereignty is no excuse for a regime to gas its own people, as the Al-Assad regime is doing in Syria, or for the Council to do nothing. Sovereignty is no excuse for any dictatorship to abuse its people, spark violence, foment regional conflict and then get off scot-free.

If that were true there would be no reason for us to be here. For the words of the Charter to have meaning all Member States must be accountable and abide by them. For the words of the Charter to have meaning, the Security Council must be willing to act when Member States violate them. The Security Council has done an admirable work to address the threat of North Korea, but too many Member States have failed to abide by their Charter obligation to enforce the sanctions the Council has imposed. In the meantime Pyongyang continues to develop its nuclear arsenal, threaten its neighbours and categorically refuse to discuss denuclearization. We must do better.

For far too long the Council has watched Iran play a deeply destabilizing role in the Middle East, without

addressing the urgent regional threat it poses. In Ukraine Russia remains an occupying force in Crimea and a destabilizing force in eastern Ukraine. Let me repeat: the sovereign rights of nations are fundamental. But when we do not uphold the principle of sovereignty by allowing the Kim, Al-Assad and Putin regimes to act with impunity, just the opposite is true. When the Security Council provides accountability for nations that violate the United Nations Charter, we protect sovereignty. Such was the case in 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. After the invasion, Saddam proceeded to ignore 11 resolutions calling for him to withdraw. On 29 November 1990 the Security Council rightly invoked Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It gave Saddam Hussein one last chance to do what was right. In January 1991, after he refused to comply, a coalition of 34 countries, led by the United States, began the fight to liberate Kuwait. That coalition's efforts were successful. The proof is in the Chamber today. The sovereign nation of Kuwait presides as President of the Security Council.

I once again thank our Kuwaiti friends for calling today's important meeting. It is a great reminder of the purposes of this body. And I congratulate the entire nation of Kuwait for being a living reminder of what this institution can accomplish when it lives up to the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): At the outset, allow me to start by thanking the delegation of Kuwait for convening today's timely briefing.

Today's theme has been fundamental to the United Nations since its establishment. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain relevant even in the contemporary history of international relations. More than 70 years ago, the peoples of the United Nations announced their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. However, the world remains at war today. Around the world, there are approximately 40 armed conflicts of varying intensity. The existence of more than 65 million displaced people and uncontrolled migratory flows constitute a favourable environment for trafficking in human beings and replenishing the budgets of international organized crime and terrorist groups.

All these phenomena are an exorbitant price to pay for States' and Governments' irresponsible behaviour in international relations or for the sake of their own peoples. The violations that we witness overlook or distort our perceptions of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the Organization and international law, which were formulated after the bloodiest war in the history of humankind — a conflict that claimed more than 60 million lives. Today, the world has come closer than ever to the point at which serious international conflicts are ready to erupt. The threats of the use of weapons of mass destruction, the growing rivalry among regional Powers, the high tension among military-political blocs, and the crisis of trust among the key actors in international relations are of very serious concern to us. They underline the need for an urgent and dramatic shift in thinking from high-level dialogue and deliberative platforms to real action.

Kazakhstan's vision of global anti-military measures is set forth in the manifesto of President Nursultan Nazarbayev entitled "The World. The Twenty-First Century". In the manifesto, the idea of a comprehensive programme for achieving a world without conflict by the United Nations centennial in 2045 — "The Twenty-First Century: A World Without War" — was evoked. Given that two of the main purposes of the Charter of the United Nations are to save subsequent generations from the scourge of war and to adopt effective collective measures to prevent and eliminate threats to peace, we must make a determined and concerted effort through the collective and responsible actions of nations to destroy the disease of war and conflict.

At a briefing held in the Security Council on 18 January on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (see S/PV.8160), during our country's presidency of the Council, a broad and useful exchange of perspectives took place. My delegation highlighted the significance of confidence-building measures in achieving peace and security goals, which, in turn, play a key and ever-increasing role in the prevention of conflicts and the resolution of pressing global problems. We know this from our own experience. Indeed, upon the initiative of my country, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, which brings together 26 countries, was established 20 years ago and continues properly to function today. Kazakhstan's efforts in its two-year non-permanent

membership in the Security Council are aimed at practical ways of ensuring international peace and security, in particular through making Central Asia a model regional zone of peace and security, sustainable development and prosperity.

We support a three-part conflict resolution strategy: reconciling peace and security with sustainable development in order to achieve lasting progress, implementing regional responses to such cross-border problems as terrorism, ecological devastation and poverty, and coordinating the interaction of United Nations structures operating as One United Nations so as to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the Organization's activities in the field.

We have at our disposal all the needed and time-tested strategies and best practices to change the world for the better. In this way alone, through responsible and predictable domestic and foreign policies, can we effectively and collectively address the challenges and threats of our times, advancing on the path of creation, progress, economic well-being and international security for all, without leaving anyone behind.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for focusing the Security Council's attention on the purposes and principles of our Charter of the United Nations. I also thank the Secretary-General and His Excellency the former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for their briefings today.

Today's meeting, as the President has said, takes place around the twenty-seventh anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait, which was a clear example of the United Nations fulfilling one of its main purposes, namely, to maintain international peace and security. As States Members of the United Nations, we have a responsibility to adhere to the Charter's ideals and to work within the United Nations framework to solve the most challenging global problem. When the horrific violence in Rakhine state forced the Rohingya to flee, the Security Council played a vital role, focusing the world's attention on the situation and encouraging action by the authorities on the ground. We must now take further action to ensure safe and voluntary returns take place, and we should visit the region.

The Council must work together to achieve the Charter's purposes. When we do, we are successful. We have remained united in our commitment to providing the tools to achieve peace in Colombia and in our support for the peace process in Cyprus. We were successful in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. We have remained united in our condemnation of Da'esh and the need for accountability for that group's atrocious actions, and we have remained united in our condemnation of the flagrant violations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of international law, where we have used sanctions to constrain the that country's pursuit of illegal nuclear and ballistic-missiles programmes. In this context, sanctions play a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security. The implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which balances sanctions relief with strict nuclear restrictions, is another significant achievement of the Council and marks a major step forward in preventing Iran from developing a nuclear-weapon capability.

However, there are instances where Council disunity halts our progress. We cannot ignore Russian attempts to redraw the boundaries of Europe. This month marks the fourth anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea, in breach of Article 2 of the Charter. We remain deeply concerned by the degradation of human rights in eastern Ukraine, and we call upon on Russia to abide by the Minsk agreement commitments that it has undertaken. It is crucial that we uphold the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Nor can we ignore the conflict that continues to rage in Syria or its causes. The Syrian conflict in all of its abhorrent acts and human misery is an example of what we all set up the United Nations to prevent. We have proved that we can work together to ease the suffering of the Syrian people. When we adopted resolution 2393 (2017), the United Nations was empowered to continue to deliver urgently needed humanitarian aid across conflict lines and borders.

Knowing that we can deliver results makes our failures even more frustrating. These failures are having devastating consequences. The Al-Assad regime's brutal assault of eastern Ghouta, including reports of chemical-weapon use, is causing unprecedented levels of suffering. The targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a violation of international humanitarian law. Eastern Ghouta is not a de-escalation zone; it is a zone of death and destruction. We must work together to end the conflict and prevent further suffering of the Syrian people, and I hope the Council will soon be able to pass a resolution to that effect. The Geneva talks represent the only sustainable path to peace. The opposition continues to engage constructively and in

good faith and without preconditions. The Al-Assad regime must do the same.

We must also hold the Syrian regime and others to account for the repeated use of chemical weapons. Our failure here is acceptable. We must demonstrate that such abhorrent actions have consequences. An independent expert international investigation set up by the Security Council concluded that the regime and Da'esh have used chemical weapons. We must not allow Russian actions to force the closure of this investigation to deter us from pursuing accountability.

Despite our differences in the Security Council, we have demonstrated our capacity to show unity in the face of adversity. We must strive to do this more and to think creatively about how we find common solutions. The United Kingdom is a proud signatory to the code of conduct put forward by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, and we are committed to never voting against a credible draft resolution on preventing or ending a mass atrocity.

We fully support the Secretary-General's efforts and proposals to improve the United Nations ability to prevent and respond to conflict and promote development. That includes reforms to peacekeeping, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the millions of military, police and civilian personnel who have helped to protect civilians around the world.

We must also continue to tackle relentlessly the scourge of sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, and recognize the disproportionate adverse effects of conflict on women and the important role of women in peacebuilding.

We must encourage increased cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements, as set out in the Charter, whether with the African Union Mission in Somalia in its fight against Al-Shabaab, the Economic Community of West African States in its resolution of conflict, or the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel to combat terrorism in West Africa.

Our predecessors drafted the Charter of the United Nations in the name of the peoples of the world to help save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In some places, we are succeeding; elsewhere, we are falling woefully short. Let us all reflect on what more we can do to live up ideals of the Charter — our Charter.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China highly commends the Kuwaiti presidency for its initiative to convene today's debate. I warmly welcome the Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Sheikh Al-Sabah, to New York to preside over this meeting.

I wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and welcome back the former Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The United Nations was born in the afterglow of the world victory against fascism. The Charter of the United Nations gave expression to the reflections of peace-loving peoples around the world and carries the optimistic hopes of all nations for peace and development.

Today's world is undergoing profound changes not seen in a century. We should stay true to our agenda, uphold our mission, resolutely safeguard the principles and purposes of the Charter and continue to carry forward the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. We should work together to build a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation, and establish a community of shared destiny for humankind. I should like to share the following ideas with the members of the Security Council.

First, countries should build partnerships based on equality, consultation and mutual understanding. Equality in sovereignty is an important norm governing inter-State relations. The sovereignty of countries big or small, strong or weak, poor or rich must be respected. Interference in the internal affairs of other countries must not be permitted. The international community should uphold multilateralism, pursue mutual trust and win-win cooperation, abandon the Cold War mentality and zero-sum games, and act upon the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the Charter of the United Nations in steadily promoting democracy in international relations and in governing global affairs through consultation.

Secondly, countries should strive for a world of universal security through joint contributions and sharing. In the face of traditional and non-traditional security threats, including terrorism, regional conflict, the refugee crisis and climate change, no single country can stand aloof. It is important to foster an outlook of comprehensive, common, cooperative and sustainable security, promote international cooperation across the board, adopt a holistic approach to addressing issues fundamental to world and regional security, and build universal security.

Thirdly, countries should respect the work of the United Nations as the main channel of mediation and safeguard the mission and authority of the Council. The Council, as the collective security machinery for the maintenance of international peace and security, is equipped with a sacred Charter mandate. We should support the Council, acting in accordance with the Charter, in seeking the peaceful settlement of conflict by political means and by fully bridging differences through dialogue and consultation.

As the first signatory of the Charter, a founding Member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, China is ready to shoulder all its responsibilities, stay committed to maintaining the international system built around the United Nations, uphold the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the Charter, work alongside other Member States and the United Nations, and make greater contributions to world peace, common development and international cooperation.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We join others in expressing appreciation to the Kuwaiti presidency for organizing this high-level debate and we are pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the meeting. At a time when we are facing unprecedented challenges and threats to global peace and security, the need for multilateralism has never been more indispensable to ensuring a collective response.

That is why reaffirming the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations is imperative to preserving the current global order on the basis of renewed partnership, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We know from history that the League of Nations, the predecessor of the Organization, failed to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War mainly because its members remained indifferent to the blatant disregard of the purposes and principles of international law governing inter-State relations.

Of course, no one can speak better, more forcefully and with authority on this issue than the Secretary-General himself and his predecessor, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and we thank both of them for their important remarks. We are truly pleased to see Mr. Ban Ki-moon here with us today.

In spite of so many challenges and shortcomings, the United Nations has been and continues to be an indispensable Organization. Its Charter principles and purposes also remain as relevant today as they were 70 years ago in safeguarding international peace and security, promoting respect for human rights, and ensuring sustainable development for all. The issue is how we can apply them in a manner that is consistent with the realities of our time in order to meet the needs and aspirations of current and future generations. That is why we support the reform agenda, in the words of the Secretary-General,

> "to make the United Nations more able to respond to the needs and aspirations of we, the peoples, that generated this Organization".

We are indeed living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, and what happens in one corner of the world can easily affect us all, whether it is terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change or a health pandemic. No one can be immune from these problems, nor can anyone claim to have the panacea to address them alone. We can do so only if we collectively work together, in line with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

That requires us to carry out our obligations in good faith, and there have no doubt been instances of failure that have tarnished the image and credibility of the Organization and given enough reason to sceptics to be critical. But we should also not forget that there have indeed been instances when the Organization has proved its mettle and defended its principles with vigour. Because of that, a country whose territorial integrity was aggressed 27 years ago, in flagrant violation of the Charter, not only was able to regain its sovereignty but can now contribute its part to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security.

How symbolic is it, therefore, that today this country is presiding over the work of the Security Council, 27 years after its liberation? We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the people and the Government of the State of Kuwait on this important occasion. It is indeed a historic coincidence that Ethiopia was a member of the Security Council at the height of the Gulf War and took a principled position based on the United Nations Charter to stand in solidarity with Kuwait, not only to condemn its invasion but also to fully support all the relevant Security Council resolutions aimed at restoring its sovereignty. We should certainly draw lessons from some of the achievements of the United Nations and also have the courage to

admit shortcomings and make all efforts necessary to replace them.

The Security Council has a number of tools, envisaged in the Charter, at its disposal to address the multifaceted problems that the world is facing. Chapter VI of the Charter is clear on the primacy of the peaceful settlement of disputes while being strong on the need to take preventive measures in order to avert conflicts before they erupt.

Chapter VII provides the parameters for action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, while Chapter VIII provides for regional arrangements. Unfortunately, we have yet to take full advantage of what the Charter can offer to help us overcome the constraints of self-defeating policies based on narrow national-interest calculations, which, ipso facto, lead to double standards that in turn undermine the credibility of the Security Council as the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Here the most critical issue the need is to be consistent in our fidelity to the principles of the Charter: sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Failure to do so can have grave consequences; my own country is witness to this. It is in this respect that I wish to quote Emperor Haile Selassie, who appealed for justice when Ethiopia was aggressed in 1935 but who nonetheless remained unwavering in his commitment to the international collective security system in spite of the utter failure of the then League of Nations. What he said in his address to the General Assembly in October 1963 still resonates today, and it is with those words that I wish to conclude my remarks:

> "The Charter of the United Nations expresses the noblest aspirations of man: the abjuration of force in the settlement of disputes between States ... [and] the safeguarding of international peace and security. But these, too, as were the phrases of the Convenant [of the League of Nations] are only words; their value depends wholly on our will to observe and honour them and give them content and meaning ... This Organization and each of its Members bear a crushing and awesome responsibility: to absorb the wisdom of history and to apply it to the problems of the present, in order that future generations may be born, and live, and die in peace." (*A/PV.1229, p. 1*)

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is grateful to the State of Kuwait for having convened this debate, which affords the States Members of the United Nations a chance to consider and reiterate the importance of the principles of the Charter. This event coincides with the twenty-seventh anniversary of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, in 1991; international cooperation was decisive in the liberation of Kuwait, and we are particularly pleased to see here with us today the Deputy Prime Minister of Kuwait. We would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his incisive intervention and welcome the presence of and the statement made by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the former Secretary-General.

The United Nations as we now know it was born as a consequence of the ravages caused by the Second World War at a time when the devastation caused by that war was still fresh in the collective memory of humankind. It is for that reason that the conviction took root among those who met in San Francisco that there should not be a repeat of the same mistakes that led to two bloody world wars. Both conflicts represented a huge setback for humankind in every respect, and the goal, therefore, was to come up with an appropriate formula to enable the peoples of the world to live together in peace thanks to just rules that would enable them to prosper. The main purpose in drafting the Charter was to achieve a lasting peace for humankind.

In order to achieve the peace and prosperity we so fervently sought, it was vital to establish equitable rules for coexistence within a system in which any problems that might arise could be collectively addressed. The establishment of an Organization such as the United Nations therefore proved justified, as this gave rise to the possibility of holding meetings that would enable us to debate problems that could jeopardize our common coexistence.

His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea, highlighted the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations in the statement he made during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, on 21 September:

> "It should be recalled once again that Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations enshrines the intent of its Member States to build a world of peace and well-being for humanity by encouraging

> friendly relations and mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of every nation." (*A/72/PV.13, p. 9*)

The words of my President are in line with the Secretary-General's conviction of the importance of collective security as an instrument for prevention and the idea of the urgent need to increase the use of diplomacy for peace. In this paradigm, sanctions, for example, cannot be seen as an end in themselves, and interventions, be they peacekeeping operations or measures geared to re-establishing global order, are but a reflection of the inability of the system and its stakeholders to implement the principles of preventive diplomacy to which the Secretary-General referred.

We cannot deny some of the important achievements and progress recorded by United Nations over its more than seven decades of existence in fostering peace, security and international cooperation. These achievements led to real and irreversible changes in today's world. We as Africans have first-hand knowledge of these achievements, which made a significant contribution to enabling some of our countries to take their rightful place as fully fledged Members of the United Nations after having achieved independence.

The Charter remains a valid instrument that has lost none of its relevance; we must all continue to decisively defend its purposes and principles. International relations, which must be just and democratic, must be underpinned by the principles enshrined in the Charter: equality among countries; respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-interference in the internal affairs of States; and the peaceful settlement of disputes. These principles must continue to be held as sacred and must be defended by all countries.

Relations and interactions among States must be guided by mutual respect, on a basis of equality, so that all can contribute to achieving the common good. Issues of international and regional interest must be addressed through consultation, cooperation and negotiation. Only in this way can challenges such as terrorism, threats to peace, conflicts, disputes between countries and climate change, inter alia, be resolved satisfactorily. Regrettably, we continue to note breaches of the Charter, which weaken the central role that the United Nations must play as a framework for dialogue and diplomacy. To interrupt that trend, it is important to renew multilateralism and a spirit of compromise among Member States and, of course, to insist on the democratization of the Organization's internal structures and processes.

We must not be naive or become complacent. The world is changing, and the Organization must know how to adapt and anticipate such change. The Organization's success and its relevance in a constantly evolving world depends largely on what I have just outlined. The Charter of the United Nations is flexible enough to be able to respond to the complex new challenges before us. However, it is up to us, the Member States, to be brave enough to modernize the Organization's structures and procedures; otherwise, the credibility, legitimacy and moral authority of the purposes and principles of the Charter will be increasingly questioned and undermined.

Developments in the current scenario present a clear challenge for all. International affairs are undergoing a process of change, which, on the one hand, can yield new opportunities for economic cooperation, and, on the other, presents the challenge of having to face security threats and challenges.

Building the global economy, promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty, countering environmental degradation, and so on, are actions that must lead to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which should have a positive impact on the greater well-being of, and equality among, the various peoples of the world. Those needs are most pressing in Africa, the continent that suffers most from the shortcomings of the modern world.

As we have already said, the world is in constant flux and is no longer what it was 70 years ago. That is evident in the nature of armed conflicts, especially their capacity to inflict devastation and suffering. The response of the international community should adapt to the new reality and the challenges we all face. In that process, the role of the United Nations is vital, and its purposes and principles, if used effectively, remain useful.

The world must be guided by the principle of peaceful coexistence in international relations. When it comes to choosing social systems and development models, the unique traits of every country must be respected. The principle of the sovereign equality of all countries must remain intact, international justice and equality must prevail and the rules of international law must always be applied, without double standards.

Equatorial Guinea has had its security threatened on several occasions, the last of which occurred last December. Thanks to international cooperation, which we wish to mention here, we were able to avoid what could have been a true massacre on Equatorial Guinean soil. I therefore conclude my statement by stating that the motto of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea — unity, peace and justice — which guides the actions of our country's foreign policy, is in full accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes the convening of this meeting. We are also grateful for the enlightening briefing delivered by Secretary-General António Guterres, and we welcome to New York former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whom we thank for his very valuable presentation. In particular, we welcome the presence of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, and other senior officials.

In view of the growing complexity of the global challenges we face today, Peru believes that strengthening multilateralism and rejuvenating the Organization to make it more coherent and efficient in supporting the maintenance of peace is of the utmost importance. We therefore support the reforms promoted by the Secretary-General, and we encourage him to persevere in that regard. Moreover, we believe that this is a highly opportune moment to reflect on the validity of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

On this occasion, we will focus on the importance of the principle of the pacific settlement of disputes and on a more active Organization in the promotion of the peaceful means listed in Chapter VI of the Charter: negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and resort to regional bodies and arrangements.

We welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives in that area, more specifically his mediation and the provision of his good offices in numerous countries, with a view to preventing conflicts and their escalation. We eagerly await the establishment of a high-level consultative council on mediation and the Security Council.

In line with that initiative, Peru encourages the Council to play a more active role in its work to promote and recommend that Member States resort to the peaceful means I have just mentioned, which we are convinced would constitute a major contribution to international peace and security. That conviction is based on our own experience. In its recent history, Peru has resorted to the International Court of Justice, arbitration and negotiations supported by friendly countries to resolve sensitive and complex border disputes with its neighbours — neighbours with whom, now such disputes have been peacefully resolved, we enjoy the best of relations concerning trust and cooperation.

Peru is committed to international law and its progressive development, which is why we are concerned by the unsystematic manner in which the Charter of the United Nations is often interpreted. Such interpretation attributes absolute qualities to certain principles, to the detriment of others. On the one hand, there is often conflict among the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference; and on the other, among those of justice and the fulfilment of the obligations of States in accordance with the Charter itself, including responsibilities in the area of human rights. That usually results in an impasse, which unfortunately hampers the cooperation that is required for the collective security system to develop effective preventive diplomacy in favour of international peace and security.

Given this situation, we must bear in mind that the principles listed in Article 2 of the Charter are geared towards collective action, and that, in that sense, they are complementary. The Charter requires all Member States to cooperate, while respecting their respective areas of sovereignty, to carry out the purposes listed in Article 1.

In that respect and to conclude, we wish to recall that the first purpose enshrined in the Charter is to specifically maintain international peace and security. To that end, the Charter expressly requires us to take effective and collective measures to prevent and eliminate threats to peace.

As was mentioned, this month we commemorate the liberation of your country, Mr. President, which was possible thanks to the Council's response to a flagrant act of aggression, in its implementation of Chapter VII of the Charter 27 years ago. On that occasion, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar drew some important

conclusions from the historic episode and presented them in his annual report. In view of their relevance to a more effective application of Chapter VI of the Charter, I would like to mention some of them here:

> "The hostilities in the Gulf have made it agonizingly clear that the devastation of two States, with untold loss of innocent lives ... damage to the environment and immense suffering of millions, represented a startling failure of collective diplomacy. In the aftermath of these hostilities, therefore, a renewed emphasis is rightly being placed on the need for preventive diplomacy ... Preventive diplomacy presupposes early warning capacity, which, in turn, implies a reliable and independently acquired database. There is a complementarity between the Secretary-General being fully equipped with the means presupposed in Article 99 of the Charter and the Security Council (in conformity with the spirit of Article 34) maintaining a peace agenda not confined to items formally inserted." (*A/46/1, p. 3*)

More than a quarter of a century later, the challenges and threats to peace and security are perhaps more complex, but it is clear that the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter remain valid and relevant.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Kuwait for convening this important debate on the anniversary of its liberation in 1991. This remains an excellent example of how the Security Council shouldered its responsibility by taking collective measures in line with the Charter. The fact that Kuwait just hosted a donor conference on Iraq shows a deep understanding of how the prosperity and stability of ones neighbor contributes one's own security and well-being. Regional cooperation is enlightened self-interest and represents one of the cornerstones of international peace and security.

I should like to pay tribute to the presence here today of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all his work to reinforce the values of the Charter. I also want to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his briefing this morning. We strongly underscore and echo his call for an urgent cessation of hostilities to allow for humanitarian relief in eastern Ghouta and elsewhere in Syria. We are working very hard, together with Kuwait and other States members of the Council, to ensure that we can take a meaningful decision on that issue very soon.

The Charter of the United Nations was adopted in in the shadow of two world wars. At that time, the purpose of the Charter was clear. As Secretary-General Guterres told us when he assumed office: "The United Nations was established to prevent war by binding us in a rules-based international order" (*S/PV.7857, p. 3*). The Charter is the foundation of our collective security system. However, making this system work for all means that every Member State must play its role. It is contingent upon each Member State to abide by and defend the rules-based order prescribed by the Charter. This is not just a question of political will, but a legal obligation.

Under the Charter's provisions much has been achieved, but we must also recognise that for many, the aspirations captured in its purposes and principles — to live in peace and security without violence — remain elusive. The continued aggression and illegal annexation in Ukraine, the intolerable suffering inflicted on the civilian population in Syria, our inability to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the continued violence and humanitarian crises in the conflicts in Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Libya, and the horrendous reports of violations in Myanmar are all an affront to this system.

Under Article 24 of the Charter, the Council — elected and non-elected members alike — acts on behalf of all members of the United Nations and must do so in in accordance with the Charter, its purposes and principles. The permanent members have a special responsibility. That is why the use of the veto to protect narrow national interests in situations of mass atrocities is totally unacceptable. I call on all members to adhere to the code of conduct put forward by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and the Franco-Mexican initiative on restraint in the use of the veto, especially in the event of mass atrocities. In addition, the global world order must be based on a fair and just system in which States have equitable representation. We repeat the need for reform of the Council in order for it to reflect the realities of today's world.

The provisions on peaceful settlement of disputes, as laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter, contain powerful instruments to resolve disputes before they escalate into serious conflicts. I would like to highlight five tools that the Council should make better use of.

The first is early action to resolve conflicts peacefully, in accordance with Article 33. A recent example was the Council's response to the crisis in The Gambia last year. Early and swift Council action contributed to preventing a potential outbreak of violence. A unanimous Security Council, working closely with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, adopted resolution 2337 (2017), defending democratic principles. The collective security system worked and the rules-based international order was upheld.

Secondly, the Council should support mediation and good offices in an engaged, supportive and united manner. We welcome the formation of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, and the Council should examine how it can be supported. Women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution is key. The Swedish Women's Mediation Network is contributing to peace processes around the world, and we are happy to bring that experience to the table.

Thirdly, regional organizations are key actors in preventing conflict and the settlement of disputes at the regional level. The Council should make full use of Chapter VIII of the Charter and encourage the settlement of disputes through regional arrangements and be kept informed of how the Council can support regional efforts to prevent conflict. In this context, we welcome regular meetings between the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, as well as cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union. The Helsinki process in Europe can serve as a model for building trust and confidence where such assets are missing, such as in the Middle East.

Fourthly, judicial bodies, such as international courts, contribute to resolving disputes based on the rule of law. The International Court of Justice continues to play an important role in this regard. The Council should more actively consider the possibility of recommending referrals to the Court. In addition to the International Court of Justice, the number of dispute settlement mechanisms and resort to such mechanisms are increasing. The International Criminal Court, as a deterrent of international crimes, has a key role in preventing conflict. The decision to activate the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression arises directly from the United Nations Charter.

Finally, we call upon the Secretary-General to make even greater use of his prerogatives, including under Article 99, to bring to the attention of the Council any matter that, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. Of course, we encourage Council members to be responsive to such petitions. The Secretary-General took this step in relation to Myanmar late last year, bringing our attention to the situation there and its potential implications beyond the borders of that country.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in 2005 that

> "we will not enjoy development without security, or security without development. But ... we will not enjoy either without universal respect for human rights".

Therefore, the role of the Council in preventing conflicts must be seen within the broader context.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability long before they reach the Council's agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — with its aim of peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies — together with the sustaining peace agenda, represents the masterplan for prevention. We welcome the joint United Nations and World Bank study *Pathways for Peace* on inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict, and we strongly support the Secretary-General's reform agenda, which aims to put sustainable development, conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the centre of the United Nations work.

Violations and abuses of human rights can be the first indicators of a nascent conflict. Conversely, respect for and the protection of human rights contribute to addressing the root causes of instability, thereby helping to prevent and resolve conflicts and sustaining peace. We fully support the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front initiative as a tool for early warning and prevention.

It is more important than ever for Member States to act on principles and to base their decisions and actions on international law. I would therefore like to conclude by again stressing that the Security Council is central to upholding the rules-based international order, as reflected in the Charter. This means that Member States are expected to act in accordance with the Charter, and that the Council must ensure that

States, as well as individuals, are held accountable for the most serious of violations of the Charter. This wonderful and visionary text — a copy of which I have here in highlighted colour, which I hope will help in its implementation — is still very valid, but we need to make better use of its provisions and the instruments that it offers.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council. We know the significance of today's date and that it coincides with a momentous occasion. We are also grateful to the two Secretary-Generals for their participation in today's meeting. I am very happy to see Mr. Ban Ki-moon among us.

We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting. The topic that you have proposed is extremely relevant within the context of the current state of international relations and the role that the United Nations and Security Council play in that regard.

The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations — the independence and sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the peaceful settlement of disputes — represent the basis for neighbourly relations among States and their mutually beneficial and constructive cooperation for the benefit of all.

Unfortunately, throughout the history of the United Nations, the world has witnessed numerous examples of open disregard for the Charter, right up to the illegal use of force, blatant interference in the affairs of States, destruction by outsiders of traditional social principles, violent regime change and the imposition of alien cultural and social norms. In order to achieve those ends, we often see the manipulation of concepts such as the responsibility to protect, the rule of law, human rights up front and other intrusive instruments that do not necessarily enjoy consensus support. As a result, the burden on the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, never lessens. Conflict situations, often provoked from outside, arise with remarkable regularity. At the same time, however, instead of efforts to solve all these problems together, through professional dialogue based on mutual respect and equality, we often see the artificial pumping up of an atmosphere of tension and mistrust. Instead of collective action, we see unilateral measures, economic pressure and threats, including threats of force, none of them methods that are compatible with international law and order.

The reason, as we see it, is quite clear. Some states are finding it difficult to accept the obvious fact that the era of the Cold War, along with the world's post-bipolar stage, is over. The world is in the process of establishing a new, more just, democratic, polycentric world order. Its essence lies in the emergence and strengthening of new centres of economic power and political influence. The fact is that this multipolarity is the embodiment of the cultural and civilizational diversity of the modern world, of peoples' desire to determine their own destiny and of their natural yearning for fairness. We should be reconciled to the fact that States want to build their own lives without others' prompting or unsolicited advice. Incidentally, I would like to remind Mrs. Haley that there is no regime in Russia. What we have is a legally elected President and appointed Government. I would like to ask the United States delegation to observe at least the most basic diplomatic conventions in future. And, also incidentally, Syria is also a legal Government, whether one likes it or not.

We have seen Yugoslavia and Libya bombed in gross violation of international law and Security Council resolutions and the occupation of Iraq on false pretences. No one took responsibility for any of those criminal acts, despite the international criminal tribunals established by the Council and the experiments whereby cases were transferred to outside structures that preferred to turn a blind eye, shamefully, to all of this, whether the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia or the International Criminal Court. The chaos sown in the Middle East and North Africa enabled the rise of international terrorism and led to the creation of Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and Jabhat Al-Nusra. Ultimately, the world found itself up against an entire terrorist quasi-State that has brought terror and incalculable suffering. Its final defeat, at enormous cost, has yet to be achieved. And at the same time the question of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity continues to be a bargaining chip in the geopolitical aspirations of a slew of external players. The chaos created in Libya has severely exacerbated the terrorist threat in Africa. When we recall where this crisis originated and who brought democracy to that country with its bombs, they look away in shame. We must consider the consequences of our actions, not live by slogans. We must settle protracted crises and

conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not provoke more and more new ones.

Open incitement from outside led to unconstitutional regime change in Ukraine and the rampant spread of nationalism and neo-Nazism, and to internal armed conflict and huge numbers of casualties in the south-eastern regions of the country. Why, I wonder, did we not hear at the time, in 2014, about the importance of conflict prevention, a subject that is so popular today with a number of delegations? By the way, this very day, 21 February, marks the fourth year since President Viktor Yanukovych and the leaders of the opposition signed an agreement on a political settlement in Ukraine. I would like to remind the Council that the agreement was defied by the opposition members who seized power in Kyiv the very next day, with the silent acquiescence of its guarantors. Russia has a direct interest in ending the conflict in Ukraine as soon as possible and is ready to do everything in its power to achieve that. We are working actively in the contact group in Minsk, in the Normandy format, and we have put forward various initiatives in the Security Council. However, while Kyiv continues to sabotage the Minsk process and sell the world its story of what is happening in Ukraine, and while the Kyiv authorities continue to exploit the support of their patrons, there is little hope for constructive developments.

Today we are witnessing a new phenomenon, on a historically unprecedented scale, of indiscriminate accusations of countries' interference in internal affairs and processes. That is a very convenient way of justifying unlawful acts without bothering to produce evidence, and at the same time making the world forget about one's persistent interference in the affairs of sovereign States.

I would like to remind the Council that in December of last year the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/172, on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, which clearly outlines the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, the non-recognition of coups d'état as a method of regime change, and the necessity of banishing attempts to exert unlawful pressure, including the extraterritorial application of national legislation, from international relations. An overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of the resolution. It is time to start implementing it, to reject double standards and show a genuine commitment to the system-defining principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which is more essential than ever in today's increasingly complex international relations.

Today a great deal has been said about eastern Ghouta and about the concerns that Member States and the Secretary-General himself have expressed about the situation there. We have a concrete proposal. We would like to ask the presidency to convene an open meeting of the Security Council tomorrow to discuss the situation in eastern Ghouta. I think that it is essential, in view of the concerns that we have heard today and so that all sides can present their views and understanding of the situation and propose solutions to it.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by conveying the call made by Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of France, for a humanitarian truce in Syria. France firmly condemns the current bombing of eastern Ghouta, where the civilian population are the principal victims, and calls for the Council to adopt the draft resolution prepared by Sweden and Kuwait as soon as possible, in order to enable a cessation of hostilities in Syria. The need for it is urgent and total, since the situation there is as dire as it has been since the tragedy in Syria began.

Let me thank the Kuwaiti presidency of the Security Council for having convened this debate on a topic that we hold dear, namely, respect for the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as a central element of the maintenance of international peace and security. This debate is being held at a particularly salient moment — 27 years after the liberation of your country, Kuwait, Mr. President, in which France is proud to have participated. Your presence, Sir, marks the importance of this meeting. Although our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, could not attend, he has asked me to convey to you that he welcomes and fully supports your initiative. I also welcome the Secretary-General and thank him for his briefing. As well, I welcome Mr. Ban Ki-moon and thank him for his briefing.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary purpose of our Organization, as enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter, which for more than 70 years is the framework that brings us together and the founding cornerstone of our action. The Charter is the heart and the origin of our system of global governance, which is the foundation for multilateral order — built on the rubble of the Second

World War with the universal ambition, from the beginning, of sustaining peace through a realistic system of rules applicable to all. To quote President Macron in his statement before the General Assembly in September, "in today's world, nothing is more effective than multilateralism." (*A/72/PV.4, p. 8*) Our greatest challenges — the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, climate change, migration, unequal development, massive violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and the new challenges posed by technology — are global and can be addressed only globally on a multilateral basis. It is France's deep conviction that, each time that we accept that the resolution of international crises is taking place outside of the multilateral framework and the system of rules we adopted in 1945, we are allowing the law of the jungle to prevail.

More than 70 years after the signing of the Charter, which instructs us to "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means", the Council must continue its efforts to fully utilize the tools that the Charter provides us to enable us to fulfil our primary responsibility, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, I would like to highlight three main areas for our current and future work.

First of all, we must make our peaceful settlement of disputes more effective by making conflict prevention a reality. The peaceful settlement of disputes is one of the principal tools of the Charter, as set out in Chapter VI. It plays a key role, particularly when the States involved are willing and able to engage in sincere and constructive dialogue or to resolve their dispute through an independent and impartial body. It may seem self-evident, but Article 33 of the Charter helpfully reminds us that negotiation is one of the main tools for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It regularly yields concrete results in the maintenance of peace and in all domains of international affairs. As a product of long and complex negotiations and fruit of the perseverance of those involved, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, approved by the Council in resolution 2231 (2015), regarding the Iranian nuclear question, is an excellent example. The Colombian peace process is another case in point, in a different framework, of success as a result of the patient work of negotiation and mediation. Indeed, the Charter identifies mediation and conciliation among the tools at our disposal.

In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen that dimension of his work by making full use of his good offices, as well as the mediation mechanisms and expertise in the Secretariat, which France wholeheartedly supports. That mobilization depends on the ability to anticipate and act prior to crises, through early warning and action. The establishment of a High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation is likely to further strengthen the Secretary-General's capacity for action. In many of the issues on the Council's agenda today, the Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General have the primary function of being mediators for complex but necessary negotiations. That applies particularly to Syria, Libya and Yemen today.

Mediation is one of the ingredients of what should be, more generally, a priority — prevention. As the Secretary-General has emphasized since the start of his mandate, we must, collectively, be more effective in preventing the deterioration of situations and the outbreak of conflict and its recurrence. We must mobilize to make that goal a reality. That implies having a proactive and global vision. Mediation can help ease political tensions, but beyond that, we must take into account the multiple factors of fragility, foremost among which are human rights, the economic and social dimensions and the impact of climate change.

Promoting sustainable peace following the twin resolutions of 2016 (Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) is essential to meeting that goal. The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustainable peace (S/2018/43) is an important contribution to that end, but I also wish to highlight the efforts of Mr. Ban Ki-moon in that connection.

Secondly, we must continue to promote respect for international law and our reliance on international justice, which fully contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In that respect, France underlines the essential role of the International Court of Justice, one of the organs established by the Charter to strengthen the international rule of law. We recognize its formidable contribution to this indispensable framework. Through its work, it helps us understand that the rule of law is not limited to the handling of theoretical concepts

and concretely serves the maintenance of peace and international security.

The maintenance of international peace and security cannot be understood without respecting and protecting human rights and international humanitarian law. Yet human rights violations and humanitarian disasters continue in front of our eyes, in an unbearable litany. In Syria, as I stated at the outset, in Yemen, in Burma and in many other armed conflicts, we must take action to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. That is not only a requirement to protect the peoples of the United Nations — as enshrined in the Charter — but it is also the best guarantee that the most reprehensible actions will not be committed during a conflict.

More than ever, we must remember that respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is not a concession or a favour but an imperative. Finally, the fight against impunity is a necessary safeguard to prevent the recurrence of those violations and to ensure that peace and reconciliation are still possible. The international partnership launched on 23 January to combat impunity on the part of those who are guilty of the use of chemical weapons is a reminder of France's decisive role on that issue.

The mass crimes still being committed today shock our universal conscience and remind us of every principle that inspired the drafting of the Charter. Each of those crimes is a collective failure of our responsibility to protect civilian populations. It is due to those collective security failures that France highlights the role of the International Criminal Court, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year, so that victims of mass atrocities can find redress and justice.

But the Council also has a role to play in ensuring that such tragedies do not occur. Since 2013, the French President of the Republic has called for a suspension of the veto for mass atrocities — as an expression of the political, voluntary and collective commitment of the five permanent members of the Security Council with regard to their special responsibility. We have taken that initiative with Mexico and more than half of the States Members of the United Nations support that effort and that ambitious and pragmatic reading of the Charter. It is indeed our duty to stress that holding a permanent seat is a responsibility, not a privilege, and implies the exercise of that responsibility in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter. Allow me, Mr. President, on this occasion, to warmly welcome your country's support for this initiative.

Thirdly, and finally, where circumstances so require, the Council not only has the opportunity but also the obligation to use tools to enforce the purposes and principles of the Charter. Foremost among those tools are peacekeeping operations. Since 1948, 3,438 men and women have lost their lives in such operations, and I want to pay special tribute to their sacrifice today. We are all indebted to them for our safety.

The principles by which the nearly 100,000 peacekeepers around the world today operate are at the very heart of the Preamble to the Charter — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to work together to maintain international peace and security and to affirm our faith in fundamental human rights. In the face of increasingly complex conflicts, our peacekeeping operations have to carry out difficult yet essential tasks, including, first and foremost, protecting civilians and promoting the political settlement of conflicts. While we have seen peacekeepers succeed in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, for example, we are aware of the difficulties they have to deal with, and we must work collectively — with troop-contributing countries, the General Assembly, host States and regional organizations — to make peacekeeping an ever more effective tool, strategically and operationally.

In that respect, it is particularly important to support the rise of our regional partners, who have become major players in the resolution of crises. Here again the Charter has proved its foresight, in Chapter VIII. It is through the Council's consolidated and coordinated action with regional organizations on both the political and operational fronts that we will be able to respond to today's challenges to peace and security.

Chapter VII of the Charter offers us another tool that does not require the use of force, by which, of course, I mean international sanctions, and here I want to stress that they are both coercive and incentive. They are intended to be reversible once the targeted individuals and organizations no longer threaten international peace and security or flout their international obligations. In this way, the incentivizing sanctions that the Council imposed on Iran paved the way for resolution 2231 (2015). That shows the strong potential for effective interaction among the various tools available to the Council when they are implemented strategically.

I would also like to point out that the increasingly targeted nature of sanctions against individuals and organizations threatening international peace and security minimizes their impact on civilians. The Council has done a great deal of work in that regard, and the progress in recent years has been remarkable.

Finally, as you said, Mr. President, Kuwait's experience of its liberation in 1991, which resulted from the joint work of many States with the authorization of the Security Council, showed that the use of force, in accordance with the rules of the Charter, is sometimes necessary to uphold international law.

In conclusion, I would like to say that respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter should not be a reason for rejected any reform of it at all. The Charter was reformed in 1965 in order to enable the Security Council to be expanded. It should be reformed again in order to adapt the Council's composition to the realities of the world today, and to ensure a fair representation of emerging Powers, while preserving its executive and decision-making nature. France is in favour of Security Council reform, and our position on it is well known. It includes an expansion of the two categories of members, for which we support adding a permanent seat for the members of the Group of Four and an increased African presence, including among the permanent members.

The new international order, the proliferation of crises and threats and the tragic persistence of the wars and horrors that they leave in their wake — as the situation in Syria reminds us every day — demand that we reform our Organization in order to adapt it to the challenges of our time. That will require the Council to make demands of itself in order to find the means to overcome its divisions, with a view to ensuring that the purposes and principles of the Charter continue to be an effective guide for our action in the service of international peace and security. It is both our shared responsibility and in our common interest.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I would like to express our sincere thanks to Kuwait for convening this meeting, 27 years after its liberation. I would particularly like to thank the Kuwaiti presidency for supplying my delegation with a number of copies of the Charter of the United Nations with an orange cover, which is the national colour of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We also want to thank the Secretary-General and former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for their briefings. It is a great honour, Mr. President, that you, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, are presiding over our meeting.

In 1945, the Charter of the United Nations established a new international rules-based order. The Charter protects States against acts of aggression, and the example of Kuwait is a case in point, and especially of the impact that the Council can have when it is united. The Charter provides the conditions for security, safety, human rights and sustainable economic development. It is the foundation of the international legal order, and the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands obliges our Government to promote the development of the international legal order.

The Charter came into being in San Francisco 72 years ago. Edward Stettinius, the Secretary of State of the United States at the time, was one of the key players in the United Nations Conference on International Organization. At the first meeting of the Security Council, he said,

> "Whether it succeeds or not, however, depends upon the manner in which the members of the Security Council discharge the special obligation which they have assumed. This is the obligation to agree so that the Council may be able to act, and act effectively" (*S/PV.1, p. 7*).

Let me repeat what he said. Security Council members have the obligation to agree so that the Council can act effectively, and that obligation is especially for the permanent members of the Council and their use of the veto. In the light of that, I will focus on three important areas where we believe the Council can act more effectively — effective prevention, effective peacekeeping and effective accountability. My first point is about effective prevention.

One of the most effective ways to prevent armed conflict is through the peaceful settlement of disputes. Article 33 of the Charter sets out all the mechanisms at the disposal of the parties to a dispute, including judicial settlement, arbitration and mediation. I vividly recall the 2013 event at the Peace Palace in The Hague on Article 33 in which the Secretary-General at the time, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, participated. The Hague, which is the legal capital of the world, is the proud host of the Peace Palace and home to the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the International Court of Justice. The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It can achieve

its objectives only when all Member States accept its compulsory jurisdiction, and they should therefore do so, especially the permanent members of the Council. The Council has the tools and responsibility to ensure that parties effectively settle their disputes peacefully. Let us use them.

My second point is about effective peacekeeping. When prevention fails, the Council has the primary responsibility to restore international peace and security. The flexibility of the Charter is demonstrated by the fact that the Council is able to deploy peacekeeping operations, although it does not mention the word "peacekeeping", as such. Today's complex and high-risk environments create new challenges for peacekeeping operations, as the Secretary-General indicated this morning. When we assume the presidency of the Council in March, therefore, we will focus on collective action to improve peacekeeping operations, which will be the theme for our high-level debate on 28 March.

All key players in peacekeeping operations share the responsibility to ensure that peacekeeping operations become more effective. It is the Council's responsibility to provide robust mandates that address the operational challenges in the field. It is also its responsibility to act effectively when host States renege on their commitments, undermine the activities of the United Nations or target their own citizens.

My third point is about effective accountability. Sustainable peace cannot be built on impunity. The Council established the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It has referred two situations to the International Criminal Court. It has established an independent investigative team for crimes committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), which we welcome. With those actions, it sent a clear message to victims that justice would be delivered, and to perpetrators that they would be held accountable.

When national Governments fail to ensure criminal accountability, it becomes the responsibility of the Council to provide it. A referral alone is not enough; the International Criminal Court needs the Council's enforcement power when States refuse to comply with its decisions. When large-scale violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law are taking place, Member States expect the Council to act. Investigations of crimes committed by ISIS are not enough. The Council must also ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted and brought to justice.

When chemicals are used as a weapon, the Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons should act. A total of 115 Member States, including my country, support the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Of course, we also support France and Mexico's initiative on renouncing the use of the veto by permanent members when mass atrocities have occurred. It is our view that Security Council members have an obligation to agree so the Council can act effectively. That applies particularly to the current situation in Syria, as the Secretary-General highlighted today. The human suffering in Syria, especially in Ghouta, must end. We need a cessation of hostilities now. We call the Russian Federation in particular to use its influence and do its utmost to end the hostilities and enable the Council to act effectively. I hope that if we do have a meeting on Ghouta tomorrow, it will lead to effective action by the Council to end the violence.

In conclusion, today marks the twenty-seventh year since the liberation of Kuwait from aggression. It is a powerful example that the Council can be effective when it is united and determined. It can succeed, but only if its members fulfil the special obligation they have assumed. As I just said, it is their obligation to agree so that the Council can act, and act effectively.

Mr. Eelco van Kleffens was head of the Dutch delegation in San Francisco in 1945. He became President of the General Assembly in 1954. He expressed the wish that the United Nations should not limit itself to international peace and security. It should also create international law, an international legal order. The Charter, including the Statute of the International Court of Justice, made his wish come true. The Hague proudly hosts the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and many more international organizations that play a key role in that international legal order. Those institutions are based on the Charter. As one of the founding fathers of the United Nations, the Kingdom of the Netherlands remains committed to promoting and protecting the international legal order and the Charter.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is honoured to have you here with us, Mr. President, and as the last speaker in today's debate, I thank you for remaining with us until every speaker has taken the floor. My delegation would like to congratulate the Permanent Mission of Kuwait, and, in particular, you, Sir, as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, for taking the initiative to convene the debate on this issue. We would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement and to welcome and thank former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement also.

We believe that today's debate on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is a timely one, because multilateralism is under attack. The international order, based on the sovereign equality of States, our joint participation in our Organization and governance of its system and on our development of common strategies and rules, is under threat. We believe that the effectiveness of our Organization's efforts to protect and maintain international peace and security depends on the level of adherence to, respect for and compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as respect for the sovereign equality of States, on the part of each and every Member State. Bolivia reiterates that as a country that respects international law and promotes a culture of peace, it has always advocated for the peaceful settlement of disputes, preventive diplomacy, mediation, the obligation to negotiate, reconciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement as measures that are universally recognized by the international community as effective tools for preventing hostilities, the escalation of violence, war and its terrible repercussions.

The provisions of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations are crucial to a comprehensive discussion of conflicts and their distinctive features, while respecting multilateralism, the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs. The role of regional and subregional organizations is also vital to strengthening such efforts. Bolivia categorically rejects the use or threat of use of force under any circumstances. It should be considered as a last resort only when all peaceful means of dispute settlement have been exhausted, in accordance with Chapter VII and in strict compliance with the system of multilateralism that underpins our Organization. However, all of our efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts at the highest level, which are based on the Charter, will fall short if we do not address the root causes of those conflicts, such as colonialism, expansionism, attempts to control natural resources and policies aimed at creating zones of influence or as some call them, one's backyards. It is important to make it clear that interventionist policies and efforts to accomplish regime change exacerbate conflicts.

When a Power claims that its interests prevail over those of the rest of the world and is willing to use its military might to protect those interests, it is clear that we are talking about imperialism, which is at antithetical to international law and the concept of a multipolar world. Unilateral actions in flagrant breach of the purposes and principles of the Charter do not occur only through acts and campaigns for intervention but also with the threat of the use of force. We saw that in our own region not years but just a few days ago, when one Power actually called for a coup d'état, in disregard not only for the equality, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, but for every fundamental principle of international law.

With regard to implementation of Chapter VII of the Charter, we firmly believe that sanctions cannot be viewed as an end in themselves but must be temporary and preventive. Such measures should not be used as a tool to promote double standards and unilateral political objectives. They should be designed and developed with fair and transparent procedures that clearly establish the conditions to which the States or parties must adhere. Periodic evaluations should also be carried out to take stock of their effects and make the necessary adjustments to modify or lift them based on changes in a situation. We must always seek to have the least possible humanitarian impact on civilian populations, to safeguard their rights and guarantee their well-being. Needless to say, we firmly oppose the implementation of unilateral sanctions.

An additional fundamental element in terms of respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter is maintaining a focus on the specific powers and mandates of each entity of the United Nations, in order to avoid duplication of effort or encroachment on a body's specific mandate. We must also avoid any accumulation of power and the exploitation of any of the Organization's organs, including the Security Council, for political purposes. When we speak of the United Nations, of course, we speak of it in its entirety, and not just of the various bodies that are explicitly discussed

in the Charter but also those that arise from it. When we say, for example, that the Security Council can lay claim to the right to address issues that fall within the purview of the Human Rights Council, we are seeing a very clear example of the manipulation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

As a State that promotes the principles of multilateralism and operates according to them, Bolivia welcomes and appreciates the important work of the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, whose probity and independence are indispensable for guaranteeing peace and security for the international community. The work of the Court must be supported by all States so as to consolidate and strengthen the pre-eminence of international law. Justice exists above all to promote the fraternal coexistence of peoples by emphasizing peace and dialogue rather than the use of force, aggression, invasion or unilateral action.

Bolivia reiterates that the joint work of the Organization and the unity of its Member States are vital to guaranteeing and maintaining international peace and security. The success of our work is measured in terms of the conflicts that we manage to prevent, the dialogues or negotiations that we are able to establish, and the confidence-building measures that we can strengthen. Our failure, on the other hand, will be measured in the unresolved conflicts and interventions by its Member States in pursuit of their own interests at the cost of the lives of millions of innocent people.

In conclusion, the great challenge proposed by the Charter of the United Nations is as valid today as it was more than 70 years ago. The primacy of politics, of the use of peaceful means for resolving disputes, and of international law are intimately and indissolubly linked to respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.